

Political veterans cannot afford defeat
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COMMENT There are four possible by-election results in Batu Sapi and Galas for the BN, namely to win all, lose all, win Batu Sapi but lose Galas or win Galas but lose Batu Sapi. But the three possible scenarios for the Batu Sapi by-election suggested by former Sabah chief minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee of the Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) are more interesting.

The possible scenarios are:

BN victory with votes more than the combined of opposition parties;

BN victory with less than the combined votes for the opposition; and

Either opposition party wins.

If the first scenario happens, it shows that the Pakatan Rakyat and the SAPP are still not able to threaten the BN. If the second scenario happens, both sides would have to work together. As for the third scenario, the possibility for it to happen is believed to be low as 60% of the voters are Bumiputeras.

Therefore, the Batu Sapi battle is an exploratory election for the SAPP and the PKR to see who is the strongest.

The two parties have reached an agreement to make it a gentleman's battle, but PKR adviser Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has started to criticise the SAPP. Who would still be a gentleman in a tense election?

Contrary to the SAPP campaign video circulated on the Internet, the SAPP and the PKR are unwilling to make a mutual concession.

The video was adapted from a trailer of the film Battle of Red Cliffs, a decisive battle at the end of the Han Dynasty, between the aligned southern warlords Liu Bei and Sun Quan and the northern warlord Cao Cao. The victory of the aligned forces had laid a foundation for the co-existence of the Three Kingdoms more or less equal in strength. If the SAPP and the PKR were Liu Bei and Sun Quan, they should be courageous and prudent, and work together. How are they going to achieve great goals if they are snatching political interests too eagerly and hastily?

The SAPP should have a greater influence in Sandakan compared to the PKR. The SAPP is a local political party and Yong Teck Lee used to be the chief minister of Sabah. The party has a certain appeal in the Chinese community.

The Pakatan Rakyat is having a weak organisation in Sabah and it is hard for it to enter the Muslim Bumiputera community. At the same time, the Pakatan Rakyat has to face the Galas by-election. Even worse, the candidate selection has once again triggered an infighting.

The SAPP is expected to use issues concerning the Sabah people, including the autonomy of Sabah, laggard infrastructure, poverty and illegal immigration as the focus of its campaign. This will inevitably provoke regional sovereignty sentiments and, at the same time, it is also the political capital of the SAPP to take over Sabah.

However, once they are defeated in the by-election, it will be a great blow to Yong's prestige. As a political veteran, how could he lose to a woman with shallow political experience? Barisan candidate Datin Linda Tsen Thau Lin, wife of late MP Datuk Edmund Chong, might get sympathy votes but Yong cannot.

As for Gua Musang MP Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, also a political veteran, he leads the troops but does not go to the battlefield himself. Instead, he fields his favoured man as the candidate. If they win, his influence in Guan Musang can then be consolidated.

However, similar to Yong, Razaleigh cannot afford a defeat as he can never revive in Umno if he loses.

Just like Batu Sapi, national issues, including making History a must-pass subject in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) and the Auditor-General Report do not concern the Galas people much. It is believed that PAS will focus on issues like the oil royalty in Kelantan and the unfulfilled funding promises made during the Manik Urai by-election.

The situation in Batu Sapi favours the BN. In Galas, however, the BN and the Pakatan Rakyat have equal chance to win. The scenario in the Manik Urai by-election might repeat in Galas but they might not get a miracle in Batu Sapi. - *mysinchew.com*

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